

# CONSIDERATIONS

---

On the Present

## HIGH PRICES

OF

Provisions, and the Necessaries of Life.

---

By a WEST-COUNTRY MALTSTER.

---

He that with-holdeth corn, the people shall curse him: but blessing shall  
be on the head of him that selleth it. *Prov. xi. 26.*

---

L O N D O N :

Printed for W. Nicoll, at the Paper-Mill, in St. Paul's Church-Yard.  
MDCCLXIV.

(Price One Shilling.)



To the R E A D E R.


**T**HE following little tract is intended to shew, that if manufactures at home, trade abroad, and populousness, be the real strength of the nation, the only means to obtain these ends are, that the taxes be equally and uniformly laid, that care be taken foreign states do not carry on their manufactures on better terms than ourselves, by making provisions cheap to them in preference to our own industrious poor; that every kind of monopoly be discountenanced; that the legislative power fix equitable prices, not only on the necessaries of life, but also on the means of their conveyance, whether by land or water; that the sale of provisions be made in public markets; that weights and measures be of one and the same capacity throughout the kingdom; and that proper persons be appointed to see the laws relative to these concerns duly executed, so as the statutes of the realm may no more remain a dead letter.

*Kingston upon Thames,  
January 1764.*




[illegible]





## CONSIDERATIONS, &c.

HE high prices to which the necessaries of life have of late years arose, has been the subject of complaint of persons of easy fortunes; and what still more affects the welfare, and should command the attention of the public, the murmurs of the labouring poor. Undoubtedly the intent of Providence, in diffusing plenty, is, that the whole of a nation should partake of his bounty; that those in whose hands these gifts are first intrusted, after a just and moderate advantage made, should not with-hold them from the people, or design or practise any means to retard the progress of its distribution.

It would be reasoning partially, to go back many centuries to search the prices of provisions, and to make a comparison of these to the present times: we will contract the parallel, for corn of every specie, and the necessaries of life for man and beast, as wheat, barley, rye, oats, hay, straw, cheese, butter, meat of every sort, coals, &c. are now paid for more, nearly by one-third, to what they were but a few years since, though more lands have been cultivated, and this with greater advantages, than before. The people (even before the late war) were not increased in number; nor has even plentiful harvests alleviated the weight of the prices of corn, too much for the industrious poor to bear, who, if the nation contains eight millions of people, are at least seven-eighths of this number; a body on whom every art depends, from whom every manufacture flows, who cloathe the easy, who adorn the rich, who pay our taxes at all times, and who in war face our enemies. To rescue this industrious body from the arts and intrigues of designing men, more oppressive than all the labour, than all the taxes, and than all the frowns of fortune they bear, is the subject and matter of this consideration.

*8 Millions*

As it is from the land that mankind in general expects its food and raiment, the lords or proprietors of it have an undoubted claim to such benefits as shall maintain them in that superior station Providence has placed them in. This, in the general opinion, has been estimated, so much as is equal to one-third part of the value of its produce. Landlords, for the greater part, do not cultivate their own estates, nor for the public benefit does it appear necessary they should. For this purpose they give possession of, and farm them to men of lower extraction, who, for the stock they furnish, their care and management, are admitted to an equal profit with the owners of the estates. The remainder one-third part is supposed to be expended in manure, labour, and improvement. This equal division, where subordination is regularly kept, has met with the universal approbation of every age in every free state. When deviated from, so as by any means the equilibrium is destroyed, not only the parties themselves are, but the public in general must be injured.

Neither dearths or plenty can properly be said to subvert this order, from whence this principle is admitted, that mankind, in the first of these cases, should pay more than customary for their provisions; so, when the latter takes place, they have an undoubted right to share the plenty in the same proportion it has pleased Providence to dispense it. This truth then is evident, that every means taken in a time of plenty to raise the price of corn is an injury to the industrious poor, more especially if in a time of scarcity equal methods are not put in practice to reduce it.

But to this general rule there may be exceptions, such as times of civil wars, pestilence, or other general punishments inflicted by heaven; when the farmer is either by violence or sickness forced from his accustomed care and diligence, or that the help of the laborious poor is beyond his reach; when any of these evils continue for some time, agriculture languishes; then, as to a general calamity, every help, every succour, should be tendered. England has seen these gloomy days; but after the havock made by internal strife, her senators encouraged the exportation of corn, and in 1689, when the current coin of the kingdom amounted to no great sum, and this greatly debased and lessened in value, the whole nation was made.

con.

contribute towards paying bounty for sending corn abroad, to bring in the gold and silver of foreigners. Money being then so scarce, or so much wanted, as to bear an interest of eight per cent. these ordinances soon answered their intent, and gave new spirits to the land. But from the present rate of interest, from the high prices corn has been for some years past, though so much more land has been cultivated, may it not be said the intent of the legislative power long since has been fulfilled, and that at present the manufactures of these kingdoms are weakened by continuing a bounty, so long after the causes for it have ceased?

When encouragement is given for any particular purpose, the commodity on which it is bestowed must be kept in reserve, until opportunity serves to comply with the terms required. A bounty granted for the exportation of corn must then diffuse among the sellers of it a general interest to hoard it up, and must increase its price, by paying and inducing foreigners to purchase here at a lower rate than the natives themselves can; from whence naturally monopoly and the high prices of provisions must be the event. And if an appearance of exportation can be devised, so as to make it take place of the real intent to obtain the bounty, frauds must be practised by those very persons so favoured at national expence: and in general, when exportation is not brisk enough to answer the sanguine hopes of the expectants, to make amends for this disappointment, whether the produce of the land be more or less, every means and every art will be employed to make a shew of scarcity, for which the easy as well as the industrious manufacturer must pay as much as if it really existed. All this will appear so plain as not to mistake the original cause.

Wheat, when sold at 48s. per quarter or under, if exported, a bounty of 5s. per quarter is paid: when rye sells at 32s. per quarter or under, the bounty paid is 3s. 6d. per quarter: when barley or malt sells for 24s. per quarter or under, the bounty is 2s. 6d. per quarter. Though the medium price which corn sells at, one year with another, must be greatly increased by so large an encouragement given for exportation; yet will we state them as they are generally allowed

or 1609

Bounty

foreigners purchase  
Corn at lower rate than  
natives

frauds to raise Corn

Bounty on Corn



*Price of Wheat.**Barley.**neigh. neighbour  
Europe and English  
for our sailors**80**20**13**Land by 40 Bounties*

allowed under this circumstance. Wheat 32s. per quarter, rye 24s. per quarter, barley 16s. per quarter. Then to encourage the exportation of wheat, the government, one time with another, pays nearly 15 l. per cent. for rye 15 l. per cent. and for barley 18 l. per cent. and the quantities of barley and malt exported are nearly double that of wheat, of rye it is trivial; so that, upon the whole, about 17 l. per cent. is paid to furnish neighbouring nations, our competitors in trade, with corn, the standard of life, at cheaper prices than we can possibly enjoy it ourselves. In the year 1733, by the exportation of corn, wheat rose from 2s. 3 d. per bushel to 4s. per bushel, and barley from 1s. 3 d. per bushel to 2s. per bushel. Whether so great an advance is constantly the case, I will not aver, but without exaggeration it may be said, that, from the bounty given for the exportation of corn, what is consumed at home, one time with another, bears a greater price than otherwise it would do by 30 l. per cent. Add this product, the people from hence pay more for their provisions, to that annually disbursed by the government for the bounty, and the expence the nation is at for the exportation of corn will then nearly appear. If 48,000,000 bushels of wheat, at six bushels per head, is the quantity expended annually by eight millions of people, and the increased price rated only at 1s. per bushel, makes 24,000,000 l. which added to about 70,000 l. paid by the government, produces a sum of 2,470,000 l. shewing the disadvantages under which the labouring poor of these kingdoms purchase their corn at, from the encouragement given for exportation. No nation, except England, grants bounties on exporting their staple commodities; but the consequence of continuing this load on the necessities of life, after it has answered every purpose, will best appear from the wants it has been productive of.

When Providence blessed these kingdoms with plentiful harvests, and the demand abroad was not sufficiently quick to answer the exporters wishes; to come at the bounty, barley was made into malt with so great an increase in bulk, that it became a gainful business to ship the spoiled grain on board vessels as if for exportation, and when out of sight of land to cast it into the sea. Sufficient profits were made

made from the bounty the government gave; thus so much of the public money, and the corn, both were a total loss to the people of England. Though the parliament after some time in part put a stop to this sort of exporting trade, yet it clearly shews that this encouragement to be too great, and, when unnecessary, it became the foundation of abuse.

Of late years, God be praised, no general calamity has befallen this kingdom; peace has dwelt within its circuit, no general sickness has destroyed her people, and agriculture has been extended and has flourished; yet the necessaries of life of every kind have constantly been increasing in price. To fix a true value on provisions beyond the reach of cavil, I will ascertain this from a little tract published at the desire of Sir Joseph Jekyll in 1736. The author therein lays down, as a received maxim, that farmers pay their rents well, when wheat is at 4s. per bushel, barley 2s. per bushel, and butchers meat at 1s. 2d. per stone: how much this differs from the present prices, I need not say, but in the years 1757 and 1758, to such height was artificial scarcity carried, that bread, though adulterated, was scarcely purchaseable by the poor. Farmers refused selling their corn in small quantities, though it fetched 6s. and more per bushel; public collections were made to lighten the calamities of the poor; the brewers of London unanimously declared they could not work at the former rates; butchers meat and hay reached prices before unknown. Happy would it have been had the evil stopped at this period, but with very little difference it has since continued even in the plenty of 1763. Are the same managements carrying their baleful effects through the land? Interested men know no bounds when gain is the object.

Great Britain most certainly is situated under the happiest circumstances for trade and population of any nation whatever; these are the great objects which give power to a state: she produces corn sufficient not only for her inhabitants, but has an overplus to spare to her neighbours, consequently has it in her power to feed her own labourers at the cheapest rates, from whence the number of her people should continually increafe, and her manufactures be carried

on at more moderate prices than is in the power of most other nations; yet are complaints continually made, that neighbouring states undersell us in foreign markets, and that labouring people are scarce at home. Does not this arise from the necessities of life being by ourselves made too cheap for foreigners, and too dear for our own people? Most of our corn exported has been to France and Holland, and the great increase of the commerce and manufactures of both these countries may be dated from the time the bounty for this purpose was granted in England.

To keep our calculation at lowest, if the medium price of one bushel of wheat be 4 s. and this when manufactured into bread becomes more in value by 50 l. per cent.; if the consumption be six bushels per head, and the number of consumers eight millions, the sum expended for this purpose will be 14,400,000 l. If bread, especially with the labouring poor be one sixth part of their expences, then the cash employed by the people for the necessities of life is 86,400,000 l. and the overcharge occasioned by numberless monopolies, being at least one-third part of the whole, the sum extorted by this means is 28,800,000 l. surely such as might be thought worthy of public attention! But if not with such a prospect, we must not be surprised at an uncommon industry, or that opportunity and a golden prospect, not only elevate ordinary understandings above the common course of operation, nor that it should excite them to deviate from the letter and intention of the laws of their country. As it would be endless to trace the many arts and devices put in motion to keep up the high prices of corn, and all the necessities of life, these will best appear in the picture of the engrossing farmer, traced from his origin to the time his selfish practices puts whole parishes and large extent of lands under his dominion.

Though with a simple and undesigning appearance at first setting out, yet as soon as he can conceive that the produce of the earth is first lodged with him, that contracts at home, or a scarcity in any part of the world, may be turned to his private gain, by a demand occasioning an advanced price, added to his own penury, he directly casts about to employ every power to keep his corn in his granaries;

far

up for  
is, the dear  
people

80

engrossing farmer  
the price of corn

L. Jones & Co. London



far from being punctual as usual in the payment of his rents, an excuse, and the real value shewn in store, satisfies the landlord. Corn kept back not only insures an increased price, as the necessities of mankind from hence become multiplied, but actually itself swells in bulk equal to 5l. per cent. The maintainance of himself and his family at his first setting out on this plan, is easily supplied by small quantities sent and sold at markets; for in the beginning of the designs to bring corn to an high price, markets were still known; a steady pursued scheme benefiting the projector, the more it is pursued invigorates itself; as the advantages become more sensible to the prosecutor, more means he takes to double them: from hence springs his desire of, and the coveting of his neighbour's farms, as these adds to his gains, both by proportionably employing fewer of the labouring poor, and by being the possessor, and having the administration of greater stocks of corn: Taking lands from several different proprietors, afford him many pretences to claim indulgences before unknown, except on different estates, but now artfully centered in all he occupies. From monopolies like this, at present it is not uncommon to see, if not the whole, at least the greater part of a parish rented by one man, who becoming sole governor thereof, the poor's-tax is rated by him alone, the statute or highway-duty is done as he directs, or left undone. When opportunity serves, he represents to the major part of his landlords, the unnecessary expences attending, and the little use there is to maintain and keep up dwelling-houses on farms he took purely for the sake of the land: these are pulled down, or converted into barns to place his increasing stores. Thus his possession is the lurer, as no place of residence is left for any person who might offer more rent for the land: in this manner, settled under the name of a sensible industrious man, abounding with power and riches, though his own barns are full, he purchases all the crops of the inferior farmers about him, thereby either to void the neighbouring market, or place what should come there under his command; but having now more business on his hands than he can manage, he disburthens himself of part thereof, by calling to his assistance some factor, the principal part of whose business it is to second the view of his employer,

*He Factor*

employer, to convey every intelligence that may be assisting to keep  
 up the prices of corn, as these may be circulated in the country, and  
 to be assisting in dispensing to the people corn at the heaviest rates  
 which possibly can be obtained. With an engrossing farmer thus  
 fenced and situated, will any landlord, without a dwelling-house left  
 upon his estate to shelter a future tenant, dare to consider any better  
 proposals that might be made to him for his land; or assert he does  
 not partake of the one-third of the value of the produce? I believe  
 not: the farmer must continue, his groundless complaints be attend-  
 ed to, he obtains what is termed an advantageous lease, though per-  
 haps at the same time he is taking a mortgage of this very estate un-  
 der some other person's name, or is feeding and furnishing cash for  
 the extravagancies of an heir; till at last, by being always upon the  
 spot, knowing best the real value of the land, he buys out his master,  
 and becomes the lord of his lord, having turned to his advantage all  
 the benefits of the bounty for the exportation of corn: the landed  
 gentleman had so long indulged himself, it was calculated to make  
 him amends for the damages he had sustained, or his predecessors be-  
 fore him, by the civil wars and pestilence which had afflicted these  
 kingdoms. How true this is, the number of gentlemen's houses in  
 the country at present occupied by engrossing farmers will testify.

As yet there are many great and noble families in this land, who,  
 by the largeness of their fortunes, and a due management of their  
 affairs, are in great measure placed beyond the reach and arts of the  
 engrossing farmer; but are their servants without connections, or  
 above receiving presents and gratifications for leases? All these secure  
 to the farmer the continuance of lands at or nearly the same rents  
 as before: lords seldom, if ever, come to the knowledge of the  
 exact produce of their estates.

That farmers have engrossed, every county in England can testify;  
 from hence the country in general is less populated, as employment  
 and encouragement for the labourer becomes scarce, and as provi-  
 sions become dear. Many parishes are governed by the laws and nod  
 of one single man. Markets that used to be frequented by thirty or  
 forty farmers, now see none, or, if a few, these only with an intent

*Sham Bargains* to make sham bargains, to shew pretended advices from London, and to trump up the price of grain: but are not the avenues of country churches, not to mention the resorts of public diversions in many places, crowded with the chariots and post-chaises of those very persons who formerly held open the gates for a free passage to their landlords? And the terrible consequences which arise from people of lesser extractions affecting the modes and customs belonging to their superiors, from whence again their equals and the lowest rank of people take example, and plunge themselves into expences above their abilities, are but too well known, and too often the foundation of the many vices this age is characterised by. Were this glittering of the country the effect of meer vanity, none would repine; for short would be its duration; but, what is more hurtful to community, it is supported by ill-gotten wealth, extracted from the bowels of the industrious and the labouring mechanic. This the present produce, and the present prices of corn, will verify.

*Parma. Profits*  
*(computed)* Admit land not far distant from the capital to let at 20 s. per acre, we have already observed the charges to be equal to the rent, both these must be allowed to be rated to the utmost; the land has this year produced one acre with another five quarters of wheat, which now sells at 3 s. per quarter, or six quarters of barley, which now sells from 27 s. to 30 s. per quarter: the farmer's profits from hence are easily computed; and though great allowance be made for carriage, factorage, &c. the origin of the high prices of provisions will easily be perceived.

Where no extraordinary abilities appear, where no happy or new discoveries are the occasion, no men in a short time grow rich, but thereby they fix the attention of those about them. To people who lived adjoining, or near engrossing farmers, it required no great share of sagacity to discover the causes of these excessive profits; so that persons unbred to agriculture, or who had no opportunities of engaging in the tillage of land, soon found a great part of the gains might be made by engrossing of corn. The chance of a scarcity in any one part of the world, the bounty given for exportation, the contracts the government might think needful to make, and the power of withholding the corn from markets; all these, upon an immediate

D

view,

*Origin of the high  
of Provisions*

20

*The only way  
to raise the  
Price of Corn*



view, must appear in their favour. Indeed it was acting against the known laws of the land; but where great gain is the object, and none to superintend the crime, there are many men who will hazard the offence; and if the number of offenders increase, in some measure it countenances the vice, though it becomes more generally hurtful, in proportion as it is more generally extended. Thus was the country filled with jobbers, forestallers, and engrossers; harpies who, without industry, fed on the necessities of mankind, who inveigled what honest farmers were left from their accustomed tract of simple and upright dealing, who first taught them to shun markets, and next to shut up their granaries to prevent the exchange of corn for the mite of the poor. These men employed every art to amass the grain of the kingdom, and, when become masters of the greater part of it, have had the assurance to deck themselves with the name of corn-merchants in a country where no corn-merchants legally can exist.

Thus possessed of ill-gotten stores, every device is employed to raise their value; the weather that Providence sends, whether wet or dry, whether hot or cold, is moulded to this intent. The news-papers soon after harvest are filled with accounts of great demands for corn from abroad, the markets are fed as by the hand of famine; if little or no expectation takes place, to quicken this, in foreign papers are inserted, as a piece of intelligence, that the bounty granted in England for the exportation of corn is to be taken off; letters are publicly read, and assurances given of the small stocks that remain in the country; whole tracts of land, where the harvest is supposed to be latest, are reported to be deluged and under water; and if, in opposition to all this, the voice of truth is heard, testifying the bounties of Providence, the very weather that produced the plenty is brought in to countenance the report, that the whole or the greater part of the produce of the land is so injured as to be useless. Unless for selfish views, men very seldom, or never, are at so much pains and expence to reveal the private concerns of their business. But to words are added facts, and where there is any possibility of accom-

*of jobbers,  
cors, & engrossers*

*Ambs, as a no  
prohibit, equally*

*of jobbers  
cors, &c*

*shunning  
markets*

*engrossing  
meal*

*the weather  
chollen water  
dry*

accom-

accomplishing this, the carriages or vessels used for transporting corn from town to town are monopolized and engrossed.

*The monopolists  
Carriages & Vessels*

To hide the intent of these reports, to furnish the unthinking with reasons to countenance the advanced prices of corn, has not the distiller artfully been arraigned, though much more land has been cultivated since the increase of the distilling than ever it consumed of corn? Has not the injured baker been made the common topic of conversation, when the material fault lay in the mixtures made by engrossing millers and mealmen? Has not the brewer been said to be assisting in keeping up the prices of corn to countenance his own price? at the same time as numbers of brewers offices were shutting up, and the world too well informed to engage in a business which has been losing for so many years. It is needless to repeat more of the reports spread or means used; we shall have occasion hereafter to answer to the most specious reasons given in defence of these practices.

*Engrossing Millers  
& Mealmen*

Monopoly, supported by these means, must in a number of years worm out the stock and industry of every one concerned in the manufacture of corn. Formerly, when corn came to markets in due order, the maltster, the brewer and baker when occasion served, purchased, and procuring a small stock were thereby enabled to furnish the labouring poor with provisions better, and at an easier rate; how far the canker of monopoly has preyed, and how much at present they are disabled from continuing this service, let the present circumstances tell. Engrossing farmers, or, which is the same thing, engrossers of corn, or corn-merchants, are now grown so powerful and rich, that the London market, according to the new sprung up proverb, is fed with a spoon; and has been for so long time, that necessity alone, not conveniency, at present brings purchasers to it. Maltsters, who bear a great share of the burthen of taxes, in vain attempt to buy barley at a moderate price to make into malt; the weight, riches and wiles of the corn-owners over-reach both their power and industry. To follow their lawful profession, barleys they must buy, and buy them dear, and therefore less in quantity; and from these circumstances often do they sell without profit, to furnish the

*The Consequence*

*Maltsters, &c.*

the government with the duty raised on their commodity. Malt at present bears an excessive price, and lately has reached to 38 s. per quarter; no barges, except those belonging to factors, are found at Ware, to convey any to London, and a club of a few private men meet to fix the prices of the provisions for a whole metropolis. This publickly has been asserted in our news-papers; and the writers of the informations of how much corn is wanted for abroad, have never yet contradicted it. Upon the whole, is it surprising our manufactures should decay? or that we should be undersold in foreign markets? when we undersell ourselves, and suffer that to be monopolized, for which the whole world trades, the necessaries of life; yet the near-sighted tax the government with this increase of prices from the increase of taxes. Is the engrossing farmer, or corn-jobber, more taxed than heretofore, any thing worthy mentioning? Alas, the heaviest tax is laid by self-interested men, who touch not the burthen of state with their finger; certain it is, monopolizers in general make their advantages before the commodities become taxable, otherwise this power of theirs would be lessened.

Men of the same professions are so nearly connected, that of course, where gain is the object, the same principles are not only imbibed, but put in practice. Corn-farmers grew rich, by engrossing great quantities of land, and holding up the prices of their product by the means and interest of factors and jobbers; nothing was so natural as that hay-farmers should do the same. The meadow-lands about London are let at a medium for 40 s. per acre. The cost of making the first crop of hay may reach 15 s. per acre, and of the after-grass 8 s. per acre, parish-taxes, manuring, and other charges, may be accounted 12 s. per acre; the rent and charge then of one acre of land to the grass-farmer is 3 l. 15 s. per acre. Providence, it is notorious, has this year bestowed upon us two loads of first cut hay to every acre, which now sells at 3 l. 5 s. per load, and one load per acre of after-grass, in value 40 s. per load, so that the gains made on 3 l. 15 s. or on the rent and charge of one acre of grass-land, is 4 l. 15 s. beside the profit of grazing it after these two crops are taken off: the difficulties the hackney-coachman, or that servant

of

note men  
fix the Price  
for a whole

understand  
the whole

farmer's profit  
as an engrosser

age of an acre  
the Grass Land

Dearest,  
not coming  
to the

Grass  
not for  
market  
Barren  
Farmer

Proper  
high for  
the Pro  
might be  
the whole  
hope for



of trade, who drives a cart, must labour under to pick up this money in the streets of London, to feed their horses with hay, and with oats paid in proportion to it, may easily be learned from them, as well as how scanty the pittance left is to support their families. It must appear extraordinary, that, in this branch of business, the farmer reaps more than double the advantage that accrues to the landlord;

*farmer reaps more  
double the advantage  
the landlord -*

*Gross farmer,  
not frequent  
markets on  
Barn-farm  
farmer*

but when it is considered that these people equally avoid the frequenting of markets as corn-farmers do, that they have hay-salesmen, who frequently purchase of little farmers on their own account, or have considerable farms themselves, the surprize will be removed. By these, and farmers, under various pretences, advising persons who keep cattle, to take in hay immediately from them, without purchasing at market, the quantity grown, and the quantity expended, is kept unknown; the appearance of scarcity takes place from less hay appearing publickly together, and this is the better kept up by the industry of the hay-seller, who regularly dictates to the farmer the quantity he is to send. I will not expatiate on the exorbitancy of these gains, nor on the mischiefs and discontents they occasion among the labouring poor, however deserving it is of notice; but after these profits made, after two crops are taken of the lands, the same meadows are varied in prospect; quantities of cows and sheep are seen to cover them. Every one knows the large price, and the little measure milk is sold at, and if the sheep which graze the fields after the second crop are brought in from 1 s. to 1 3 s. per head, and sold again at Smithfield before Christmas from 27 s. to 30 s. each, and again after this, the butcher is to have a large profit, at what rate is our labouring poor fed? at what prices must our manufactures sell, to support and pay gains so great and so speedily made? Proper regulations in the prices of provisions might prevent the whole of these impositions.

*Causes, why, less than  
publickly at the*

*Proportion of  
Milk sold at the*

*The Butcher's*

*The excessive Pro-  
visions - the*

*Excessive dearth  
of Cheese -*

*Proper Regulation  
might prevent  
the whole of  
these impositions.*

These instances of gain and managements will account for the excessive dearth of butter and cheese: it is almost unnecessary to observe, similar causes produce similar effects; when heretofore these commodities were brought to markets, the entering into private contracts for them was prevented; now being removed into factors hands, from out of the reach, and out the sight of the people who

E

have

have a natural right to purchase them equitably, but too much accounts for the difference of prices, which at Bedford market, in the year 1741, for the best fresh butter, was from three-pence to four-pence per pound, rose now in London to ten and eleven-pence per pound, occasions the repeated and public, though as yet unanswered complaints that have been made on these several heads; and for the restlessness of journeymen of many trades, who with advanced wages still find themselves cramped from the largeness of their outgoings for the necessaries of life. Sufficient it is, the facts are so fairly proved, and the occasions of them so clearly pointed out, as to give hopes of redress. It might appear invidious to dwell longer on this subject, and to shew the arts and fallacies of the engrosser when centered in the machanic; the adulterations and mixtures millers and mealmen make, have often been told; their whole study is to remove both the corn and the baker from markets: thus unhappily for the trade, manufactures and proprietors of land in these kingdoms, the distemper of monopoly and engrossing is become epidemical, and has reached far and near. If provisions are necessary, the means of rendering them fit for the purpose of life, and the means which lessen the severities of our winter, are necessary also. Coals are neither plenty or scarce from the uncertainty of seasons, yet at present their price is one-third more than in general ever was known.

So addicted is the heart of man to gain, however illegally obtained, that in every age, and in every country, methods not only have been taken to defraud the state of its just due, but every art has been employed to injure the greater number and most useful part of the people. Riches, when got by monopoly, and more especially when in possession of weak minds, is always accompanied with obstinacy and pride. Woodmongers were drove out of their trade from ships of very large burthen being employed to bring coals to London; the lightermen belonging to the river, formerly the servants of the public, by joining to purchase the cargoes of these large vessels, or, in other words, to engross the whole of the coals brought to London, by this means soon fixed their own prices. To redress this calamity,

an

*of journeymen  
their wages*

*adulterations and mixtures  
millers and mealmen*

*Coals 1/3  
price more  
than ever known*

*Woodmongers*

*Coals*

an act passed in the reign of Queen Anne, to open the trade, whereby all contracts between coal-owners, lightermen, &c. were rendered void, and all persons who had crafts, were authorized either to work themselves, though not free of the river, or else to employ freemen to work them in their stead. For a short time, like all other acts of this nature, this had a wholesome effect; but large ships continuing to be employed, the same persons, from their past conduct overgrown in riches, still were the purchasers of every freight, and the public left as much at the mercy of this combination as before, rather worse; for the trade being left open, the underling dealers, who by law were suffered to trade, assumed to themselves the title of coal-merchants, though scarce any means was left them to secure any profit but by illegal measures.

Monopoly was ever deaf to the cries of the oppressed; 'tis power only can command her retreat. To compass this in the coal-trade, crimps or factors were instituted; these were wisely intended to prevent the proprietors of coals from imposing on the town; as these crimps were supposed to be influenced by no self-motive, they should religiously administer justice between the buyer and the seller; and that such should be the case, care was taken by the letter of the law, that they should not, under forfeiture of a large penalty, buy or sell any coals upon their own account.

Thus far for the equity and wisdom of the law; but these men, forgetting the origin of their institution, with minds bent to amass for themselves fortunes at the expence of those they have been engaged to defend, are now become ship-freighters, as well as many of the lightermen ship-owners; so that the proprietors and these persons interests are so strongly connected, that, instead of the first being the guardians of, and the others the servants of the people, they are now become so many law-givers, who unjustly tax the rich, and as unjustly prey upon the poor. It has been before observed, that whoever is master of the matter of trade, or of its conveyance, have in their power the disposal thereof upon their own terms; need we then be surprised monopoly has again taken place in the coal-trade? The space of a few years has increased the price from 24 s. to 37 s.

per

*Coal-owners the*

*Origin of  
Crimps & Factors*

*are  
become ship-freighters*

*from 24 to 37*



per chalder, though at Newcastle this measure of the best sort sells for 8 s. only.

To these concurring facts, all tending to increase the prices of the necessaries of life, may be added the inequality of taxes in many cases. I mention not this to cloathe myself with the livery of party, the true subject seeks his country's good under every administration. Subjects owe taxes to the state for the same reason as they expect its protection; men of ill habits, who make it their business to evade their due proportion, often gloss these designs with a mighty shew of disinterestedness and liberty, and to screen themselves basely assert the little probability there is of the rich bearing their due proportion of the burthen. Thus, by flurring the characters of the representatives of the people, as if in a time when many and great taxes were necessary, they would set a little pauntry interest of their own, in competition with the general benefit of their country, and the necessary relief of the industrious labourer.

Taxes, when equally borne, are the less burthensome; less complained of, when every consumer of the commodities on which they are imposed, pay in an equal proportion to the quantities they use; when a whole kingdom is equally benefited by the protection of state, there should be no part refusing its assistance; the rich are best able, the poor most numerous, but all are children of the same family.

To trading cities, fuel is of such consequence to carry on the manufactures exported from thence, or there consumed, and the charge of conveying coals to these places, and the countries adjacent, where malting and many other businesses require them, must be so burthensome, that on no account should these situations partially be loaded with any impost. Where it is necessary to raise money, on a matter of this sort, easily may it be seen: neighbouring states, our rivals in trade, are equally compelled as we are to use them; to free these from a burthen our own manufacturers are made to bear, appears to be acting against ourselves. The city of London, with great propriety, might petition to be released from the duty on coals, and that the amount of the sum so raised, might be imposed on the quantities

ex-

*Duty on coals  
exported*

*at Newcastle*

*equality of taxes*

*equally*

exported. This not only would be instrumental in relieving and employing the industrious poor, but, by lessening the expence of our commodities, be a means of turning the ballance of trade more to our advantage.

After so much has been said with regard to the additional tax on, and the additional price of strong beer, it may appear presumptive to investigate any part of this matter. The case of the labouring poor, who pays for this commodity one-seventh more than usual, will, I hope, plead in excuse; and the plain question is, whether, notwithstanding the government required a farther aid from this branch to carry on a necessary war, had the corn-trade been put upon an equitable footing, monopolies been routed out, and the duties on malt, hops, and beer, been equally and uniformly laid; had the brewers desired, according to the statute in the 23d year of King Henry the Eighth, and not since by any act repealed, that the prices of beers and ales should be assessed by mayors, sheriffs, and other head officers in cities, and in every shire by the justices in their open sessions, in proportion to the prices of the materials used; whether, under such regulations, the prices of beers might not one time with another have remained as heretofore, both to the satisfaction of the people, and the interest of the state? Maltsters, who have made inquiries concerning the present situation of their trade, do assert, there are now more than 900,000 quarters of malt annually less made than before. When the materials of a trade are not only engrossed, but afterwards heavily loaded with imports, the effect is, that less will be consumed: and if the manufactures depending on their materials be taxed again, whereby the price must be advanced to the labouring man, if a necessary of life, perhaps for some short time the same quantities may be consumed, at least until the people have hit upon means to evade the most or the whole of these taxes. So that the natural consequence of a monopoly in the corn-trade, and of heavy and unequal taxes on malt and beer, seems to be an immediate less consumption of malt, a worse commodity in beer, and a gradual decrease in the revenue from all these branches: whether as yet such is

the

the

additional tax  
strong beer.

beer might have  
under its ancient  
monopolies provided

900,000 quarters  
annually less made

Decrease in the Mal

the case, can be known only to those who are intrusted with this part of the government's accounts.

At this time, after a great and plentiful harvest for the price of barley, we are wholly at the mercy of ingrossing farmers and monopolizers, so that the maltster and the brewer work without profit, with a price so advanced as to lessen the consumption. Since then no profits there were, nor likely to be, the matter had better been referred to impartial magistrates, who, on enquiry, must have seen where the gangrene lay, and have traced the evil to the fountain-head. In a commercial nation, the value of land and the prices of corn must naturally increase so long as a ballance of trade is in her favour; but in proportion as manufactures are oppressed, the balance must lessen; monopoly, arbitrary and fixed prices, most certainly do this. As provisions differ in value in proportion to the circumstances of times and seasons, an affectation to maintain a fixed price in any manufacture whatever, must not only undermine its own sweet foundation, but infallibly must be a detriment to the public. Another reason may in part be the occasion of this decrease of malting business: from the price of porter being raised one-seventh, more foreign spirits are drank, and a great number of private persons brew for themselves without paying any beer or ale duty; so that the tax being bore by a lesser number of people, becomes more and more burthensome.

I do not pretend to be expert in brewery accounts; but this difference between the man who can afford to advance a small sum of money to purchase utensils and malt to brew his own strong beer with, and the labouring poor who buy it at a public house, must be obvious to every one who reflects.

Porter-beer is started from the brewer to the victualler at 28s. per barrel; suppose the brewer's profit one time with another to be 2s. per barrel, remains 26s. the cost and charge of brewing this beer, with its excise included; this duty is 8s. per barrel, remains then 18s. per barrel for the cost and charge of brewing this beer, without excise. But the brewer is at great expence for ware and tare, and must keep many

*manufacture  
oppressed  
common  
abolition of  
fixed —*

*but the  
improbable*

*Brewing  
and —*

*Porter-beer*



many carriages, horses, and servants, to move his commodity, besides giving gratuities; all these may be esteemed a charge of 1 s. per barrel; so that the real cost and charge of brewing this sort of beer is 17 s. per barrel. I know enough of malt to assert, that no part of this grain will make beer, but the flower. This the private brewer can extract as easily and as readily as the common brewer can, and consequently to as much advantage. But when we see men of every business, or of no business, become brewers, and in London we find porter-beer of such a diversity in taste, colour, and fineness, it surely must be said this arises from a diversity of ideas, or, what is the same, from some material difference in the ordering or manufacturing the same commodity. Now, as that which is right, is always alike in the same case, such a diversity cannot be admitted to be justly founded: it is then no injury to the knowledge of many of these gentlemen to say, private persons have the same chance of brewing well as the reputed brewer has, and that drink of the same quality and nature may be brewed by private families for 17 s. per barrel, as is sold by the victualler to the industrious poor at three pence half-penny per quart, or, which is the same, at 42 s. per barrel. Whether it is just the disparity between 17 s. and 42 s. for the same liquor, in the same place, should subsist? are questions which need no reply.

*Sic vos non vobis melificatis apes.*

If the premises before laid down has been indulged with the reader's attention, he will certainly make this conclusion, that the people of England are more severely hurt in the price of the necessities of life, by the arts and devices of designing men, and by the taxes not being equally borne, than ever they were by the legislative power for the support of their laws, liberties, and properties; this without any probability of redress, unless by the interposition of supreme authority. But as it is necessary for the authors of such designs if possible to keep unnoticed, or at least to justify themselves to the inquisitive, so it may be proper to examine the principal reasons they make use of in this case, to shew these in their natural colours, and to expose their futility.

Many

brew for 17 s. per barrel  
whole regna 42 s.  
3 1/2 pence per quart

Many of the reports artfully spread in order to increase the prices of provisions, have before been taken notice of; it would be needless here to repeat them. The supposed unrefutable arguments are these:

It is the undoubted right of every man to make the greatest advantages he can in disposing of his property.

When provisions are plenty, the labouring poor, being supplied at an easy rate, neglect or refuse their accustomed labour.

By exportation of corn, much money is brought into the land, where it is always wanted.

Arguments of this sort, in a country blessed with laws and liberty, require but little answer; indeed they stand self-confuted, decency alone can countenance any concern being taken about them.

As the inhabitants of every country are subservient to its laws, so every man taking up a profession is bound to obey the intent of the ordinances provided for his particular case; this being his own private choice and security, as well as the good of the whole. If monopoly in general be a vice, engrossing of farms, as this destroys the equitable prices of provisions, is more evidently so: the law requires farmers to bring their corn to market, that it may not pass from hand to hand to be enhanced in prices, either by a difference in measures, by falsehoods, or by cunning, forestalling, or engrossing; it is enacted, shall not only be corporally punished, but with the loss of the goods; this to prevent extortion. So far then from the laws countenancing these designs which tend to distress the poor in the state of the necessities of life, it forfeits the property itself of whosoever devises or practises means of this sort: and this is consonant to the laws of God, that, to accelerate the ready distribution of bread, he ordains, No man shall take the nether or the upper millstone in pledge, for he taketh the life of man in pledge. In every state blessed with freedom, the general custom which allows to the farmer, for the land he rents, and the stock he employs, a profit equal with that of the proprietor of the land, seems to be the golden rule, and in no wise should be deviated from; all more is extortion, and as much intentionally forbid by law, as usury is in the traffic of money. Were it not so, the same

same argument would subsist for the abuse of power of any kind, strength, and cunning; both these are properties, on a full exertion of them the consequence would be rapine, oppression, and bringing back mankind to a savage lawless state: thus in the necessities of life, that these should be under laws and regulations, is of as absolute necessity as life itself. The engrossing of farms have occasioned markets to be deserted, markets becoming useless has been the foundation of extortion, and extortion becoming general has thought this a sufficient plea, that, man for his own private gains, might prey on the vitals of the industrious poor.

One of the means by which the slaves in our colonies are compelled to labour, is to shorten the allowance of their food, these hapless creatures having few other ideas of property than that which appeases hunger and thirst. Britons, however poor, are free; they work for hire, and the fruit of their labour they are intitled to lay out in such manner as they like, and to the best advantage for themselves and their families. Any unfair device that tends to increase the prices of the necessities of the industrious, is base and tyrannical: for as the necessities of life rise in price, the salary that is to procure them becomes thereby less proportioned to their labour; consequently when this circumstance designedly takes place, by so much, as it doth, are the poor robbed of their hire, and the more so, as in a time of real scarcity, for this, their wages are not increased. Industry unrewarded is often the cause of despair, and despair frequently the cause of the prostitution of women, and of men seeking relief by the most unjustifiable means. If the poor neglect providing for their families, if they appear not to have a visible way of livelihood, the laws are open to punish them, and magistrates appointed for this purpose; so that this concern in no wise belongs to any private person, or to any combination of men. If by provisions being cheap the idlest could so effectually be supplied, as that working only one half their accustomed time would be sufficient to maintain them, magistrates, and the chief of manufactures, would soon discover too much was paid for labour; and, did they not, many wanting employment, and more deserving, would embrace so lucky

*necessaries  
the Ple under Regulation  
as well as life itself*

*unfair device  
of necessities*

*Low & compell  
to work when the  
cheap*



a circumstance ; for where work is, and provisions cheap, the labourer resorts ; thus our manufactures would be carried on at easier rates, the demand abroad would encrease, a greater number of hands would be employed ; and if provisions were at reasonable prices, there would remain more persons at home to consume them ; but to restore to the kingdom these real blessings, industry must be countenanced, and the labourer fed not from the hand of monopoly, but on equitable terms.

Money being the scale by which commodities of all sorts are measured, as a commodity it is a measure to itself ; the rate of interest points out its real value, so that easily it is known if it be too dearly purchased. As the bounty now stands, we have shewn the nation pays from 15 to 18 l. per cent. discount, for the money that enters from the exportation of corn, at the same time the interest of it with us is from 3 l. to 5 l. per cent. Procuring money on the first of these terms cannot be understood to be a national benefit, since not only this discount takes place, but the charge is many times doubled to the home-consumer to obtain it. The consequences of provisions rising in value, fall on our manufactures, encrease their original cost, prevent their being exported, keeps our labouring poor idle, forces them to desert their native soil, and shuts out from us a much greater return of each, which otherwise would flow in, from the sale of the materials found in this island, and from the labour of the industrious poor employed on them. Corn is one of the staple commodities of this kingdom, wool is another ; what might be the consequence of a bounty granted to export wool unmanufactured ? That it would bring great sums into the nation, is most certain, since our neighbours procure wool from us under the greatest difficulties, and the greatest hazards ; nay, even it would enrich our farmers, our wool merchants, &c. but would not the damage of exporting it far exceed the benefits gained ? Under these circumstances, would it not raise the prices of our home-manufactures, and in proportion decrease those of our rivals in trade ? Would not this enlarge their commerce to our ruin ? If this be true, it would be hurtful to encourage our neighbours to give us their money for unwrought wool, because it would

oppress

*Consequences  
the poor*

*a Bounty  
on  
Wool.  
unmanufactured*

oppress our industrious poor. And is it not the same to feed our competitors at a cheaper rate than ourselves, for where the necessities of life is the concern, what material difference is there between fuel, raiment, and food?

That money thus dearly bought from a disadvantageous exportation of corn is wanted, is very true; but surely not for the state, except it be this immense discount, which from out of the public revenues is furnished to many persons who complain of the taxes which raise it, nor is it wanted by the public, who pays at least 30 l. per cent. to procure it. The money returned from abroad for corn centers with the corn-dealers, who bartered their commodity for it; that is, with corn-merchants, monopolizers, engrossers of farms, and jobbers of corn: nor is it by them applied either to raise the value of lands, or to any public benefit. On the contrary, by this means their hands are strengthened, so as to enable them to form greater magazines, to pay more for devices and arts to deceive mankind; to oppress the manufacturers of these kingdoms, and to wrest the necessities and conveniences of life from out of the hands of the labouring poor. Such are the persons who want this money, such the purposes they apply it to, and such the means by which this want is entertained.

Perhaps somewhat more is wanting, and that is, to answer an assertion too often, and too confidently made, that, from the bounty given to export grain, there has been so great an increase of agriculture, as even to lower the prices of corn of every specie bore before this act took place. This affirmation has received much credit upon the faith given to Bishop Fleetwood's tables of the prices of wheat and malt, from the year 1646, which tables (however well intended the author of them might be) will on due examination be found to be incorrect and false in every individual article. Bishop Fleetwood wrote his *Chronicon Pretiosum* purely to shew the great advance there was in the prices of provisions from the year 1450 to his time. What he collected was at Windsor, where the measure sold by exceeds the standard bushel considerably; he reports the prices as paid in the retail way for the use of private families, perhaps too according to the accounts he received from his steward; such cannot be called the regular and true prices of corn as at the market of London, where many ships are freighted, where many brewers,

*feeding on Corn  
cheaper than on fuel*

*Remedy a Corn*

*Remedy improved*

*Fleetwood's Tables*

ers, bakers, distillers, and maltsters, buy great quantities at one time, and where no other measure but the standard bushel is admitted; and this is so true, that, upon a candid examination, Bishop Fleetwood's tables will be found to exceed the real prices, according to the standard bushel, nearly one-fourth or more what they were at the same time at the London market. Nor would I hereby be thought in the least to impeach this Gentleman's character; his enquiry into the prices of corn were peculiar to one intent, and not to so general a purpose as to lead him into an examination of many circumstances, which otherwise tended to deceive him; his station in life prevented a constant attendance on a public corn-market, and his views tend chiefly to fix the expences made for provisions by private societies, or private families, and not to point out the standard prices at which wholesale traders and manufacturers purchased at. This fact (tho' too long here to be entered into) will on enquiry be found to be true, and the errors in the table to be nearly in the proportion I have just mentioned; so that notwithstanding the great increase of cultivated lands, this truth is evident, that from too great an encouragement given to export corn, and from the general monopoly from hence subsisting, the price of every specie of grain, of provisions, and of the necessaries of life, has considerably advanced.

After thus much said, and which perhaps may fatigue many of those who indulge this little tract with a reading, it may be supposed the high prices of the necessaries of life have more than once been the object of my reflections, as a subject of this sort, is often thought beneath the notice, and in general without the sphere of great personages. Though it may appear assuming in a private man, to point out some remedies where so many evils concur, yet as these are of consequence to trade, and to the industrious part of mankind, I should think myself wanting in the duty I owe to my country were I not, to this history of the calamities of the labouring poor, to add somewhat for persons of more talents to new model or improve.

This is not the first time the monopoly of farms has been complained of, nor has such complaints been particular to these kingdoms; every soil, and every climate, have deemed them detrimental, and laws before now have been enacted limiting the extent of land to be farmed to one person. To this general consent of mankind, I must be permitted to add how much it should be in the opinion of a judi-

ready the  
land like farmed  
man.

Engl  
Corn



cious farmer; a correspondent of the Editors of the *Museum Rusticum*. He expresses himself as follows. "The poor farmers are under a necessity of selling their corn before the winter is passed: if markets are low, they fail in the payment of their Michaelmas rent, their stock is in consequence seized, and some overgrown monopolizer in the neighbourhood adds their little plot to the many formerly separate farms he already holds. Were the interest of the community to be consulted, no man would be allowed to rent above three hundred acres of land: the profits of such a farm will, with proper regulations, maintain a family decently and well, and it is not requisite, or even salutary, that farmers should acquire large fortunes."

The laws of England neither admit of, or even suppose such to be in being, as corn-merchants, engrossers, and jobbers of corn, or provisions of any sort, without punishment. Whatsoever persons (says our statutes) shall engross, or get into his hands by buying, or promise, taking other than by lease of land, or tythe, any corn growing, or other corn, with intent to sell the same again, shall be reputed an unlawful engrosser, and engrossers being by law reputed oppressors of the poor, thirsting after wicked gain, and deceiving the rich, for the first offence are to be imprisoned two months, and to forfeit the goods; for the second offence, are to be imprisoned six months, and forfeit double the value of the goods, and for the third offence, the pillory, loss of all the goods, and imprisonment, at the King's pleasure. See statutes 5 and 6 of King Edward the Sixth. These laws, when regarded as laws, were respected by the people, provisions of every kind were brought to markets instituted by patent, and markets were found to be so useful and necessary, that it was recommended one at least should be settled at every seven miles distance. Under such restrictions, and without a bounty to convey the corn from out of the land, monopoly scarcely could shew her head.

Formerly, when the people eat their bread unadulterated, the baker bought his wheats, and either ground them himself, or paid so much to the miller for this purpose; the flour being then the nett produce of the corn, and unmixed, the baker was under no necessity to use alum, or other materials, foreign to the purpose, as often now is the case, to hide the wickedness of the mealmen; but millers growing rich, turn meal-men, and not only refuse the use of their mills to the

H

baker,

Miller &amp; Mealman

baker, but to those who make their own bread, and thus fixes the prices he pleases on the mixed corn he grinds. Such are the evils arising to the public from people being suffered to enter into more or other professions than their own.

The plain reason why foreigners purchase their corn from England, is that they want it; when this circumstance takes place, they must purchase at any price; when it does not, they buy only with this view to sell again; and in this case are foreign engrossers like our home-bred corn-merchants, both equally injurious to the industrious poor; but in suffering them to purchase our corn, should it not previously be inquired into, whether we have a sufficiency to spare? When corn is at mean prices, wheat at 4 s. per bushel, rye at 3 s. per bushel, and barley at 2 s. per bushel, as no other method at present is practised to know the quantity annually grown; from hence it must be supposed, at these medium prices, there are of each but just the quantity necessary for the use of the inhabitants. When such is the fact, granting a bounty to export, even supposing this bounty not productive of monopoly, which loads trade with a charge upwards of 14,000,000 l. much more burthenome than all the taxes raised, still is it not paying either to furnish ourselves, or is it not giving our neighbours (the rivals of our trade) at such prices, but more so, when there are much higher encouragement to buy our corn, to compel our own people to purchase it back again at a much dearer rate? This, often as it has been the case, surely cannot be proved to be a national advantage, tho, most certainly it may be a private one. Plentiful years succeeding each other, must occasion the prices of corn to be much below their mean value; at such times a bounty granted to export corn, perhaps may be of some service to the nation and to the farmer; but if allowed when the prices exceed the medium, it must detriment the state, and the landed as well as the trading interest. The present prices then on which the bounty is now paid, appear to be much too high; a clearer distinction (as to the bounty) seems to be wanting between barley and malt; malting should not increase the value of barley more than one-twentieth part. But as the case now stands, a bounty given on malt not truly dried and cleaned, is in effect giving money to export dust and water. Experience too often has proved this observation to be true.

It

*Superior*

*100,000 bush*

*Exp. 100,000*

*2 Bounties*

*any*

It is the standing interest of all factors to keep up and increase the prices of provisions they are concerned for; by this they recommend themselves to their employers, and frequently share with them the profits they are assisting to obtain; and though such persons are necessary to personate in a market the proprietors of corn or of provisions, in no shape should they be suffered to have any interest therein, or in the carriages which convey them; the ill effects of these have already been pointed out; besides, being sworn to an exact performance of justice, proper penalties should be devised to restrain them from these or like practices.

To general evils, general remedies should be applied; the necessities of life have been shewn by many means, and in many cases, to be made the occasion of unjust gain, from whence our manufactures decrease, our island depopulates, the bulk of mankind is thereby oppressed, the proprietors of lands unbenefited, and every part of the state injured. It has often been proposed, and certainly easily might be effected, to take an account annually of every specie of corn, and food for man and beast produced in the kingdom; this compared with the number of the inhabitants, and the cattle to be fed, the prices of each sort with great certainty and justice to every one might be ascertained; somewhat like this practised in respect to hops has prevented monopolies on this commodity, and turned out to the advantage of every party concerned. With what facility this might be done by the assessors of the land-tax, need but be mentioned: every land-holder then would be fully apprised of the produce of his land, the little farmer would be exempted from the oppression of the rich, the extraordinary gains of the husbandman would arise from industry, and the improvement of every estate must be the consequence: if subordination is requisite, the greatest extent of land to be occupied by any one person necessarily should be fixed. Markets appointed by patents should be encouraged, and every sort of provision be sold there only by weights and measures, whose uniformity should extend throughout the whole nation. To every market should be appointed an intelligent clerk, who on no account should be biased either by buyer or seller, who should inspect the goodness and wholesomeness of commodities allowed there to be sold, occasionally determine the difference of the inferior and middling sorts from

*Factors like referees  
or severe penalties*

*good inspection  
like  
Hops*

*Extent of Land  
should be fixed  
markets  
Weights & Measures*



from the best; the very samples now farmed out, the expence of which is of no utility to the public, would be a sufficient salary: to such a clerk should be certified the purposes for which corn was sold, this more particularly than any other sort of provisions, whether for bread, for brewing, for distilling, for exportation, for food of cattle, &c. and a non-compliance therewith should be surely punished, for by passing through four hands, the farmer might have his proper reward, and the consumer purchase at an easy rate.

If laws could execute themselves, in England already there are such to regulate the sale of the necessaries of life as perhaps might have prevented the whole of these considerations; but experience has shewn these to be scarcely known or attended to, for want of impartial persons to watch, so as the intent of the legislative power be not frustrated. A board appointed to regulate and inspect the inland or home trade, which would be but little expence to the nation, in comparison to the great and general benefits that would arise from it, might guard us against the infringement of these laws, and regulate the prices of all the necessaries of life; (the quiet about the price of bread, notwithstanding the difficulties under which the corn-trade labours, is greatly owing to a regulation of the law) By such a board might be fixed not only the prices, but the rates of conveying corn and merchandize of every sort, which would be found equally useful, if not more so than that of hackney-coaches: to them might be referred the combinations and impositions, both of masters and servants; they might be the proper judges whether any man followed to the detriment of the public, any other trade or profession than that he was entitled to; such and many other enquiries would naturally become the objects of their attention for the public benefit. From hence, not only many national advantages might be expected, but agriculture, countenanced by virtue, would receive its due reward; our manufactures would rear its head, our land would increase in value, industry, and in people; the sinews of our kingdom being strengthened, in proportion to our happiness at home, should we be respected abroad.

F I N I S